Heroic Hindu Resistance to Muslim Invaders

(636 AD to 1206 AD)

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CHAPTER I
NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON INDIAN HISTORY

Mathew Arnold had composed his famous lines with reference to a particular context. He had the Buddha and similar Hindu sages in mind when he wrote the following famous lines:

> The East bowed low before the blast,
> In patient deep disdain;
> She let the legions thunder past,
> And plunged in thought again.

Little did the poet suspect that his tribute to Hindu spirituality would be twisted to embellish an imperialist version of Indian history according to which the "meek Hindu" had always been preoccupied with sterile speculations, and seldom stood up in defence of his country and culture.

PERVERSE VERSION OF INDIAN HISTORY

This version of Indian history was formulated by a few misinformed or motivated British historians. But many Hindus participated in popularising this version in the mistaken belief that they were thus proving the superiority of India's "spiritual culture" over the materialistic civilization of the modern West. In due course, this became the standard lore taught in our schools and colleges under the system of education sponsored by Christian missionaries and British bureaucrats. The same system of education has not only continued after independence but has also multiplied manyfold. It has spread this version of Indian history to larger and larger segments of succeeding generations. Muslim and Marxist "historians" have promoted it with an ever increasing zeal. They may not have any use for Hindu spirituality. But they find this version of Indian history very convenient for advancing their imperialist causes.

In the process, India's history has become a history of foreign invaders — Aryans, Iranians, Greeks, Parthians, Scythians, Kushans, Arabs, Turks, Persians, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British — rather than a history of the greatest civilization which the world has known, and later on of Hindu heroism which fought and ultimately frustrated all foreign invaders. India itself has become a sub-continent seething with a mass of heterogeneous humanity rather than an ancient and indivisible Hindu homeland. Indian people have become a conglomeration of nationalities, racial groups and religious communities which are finding it difficult to co-exist in peace, rather than a national society which is trying to reform itself and reclaim some of its unfortunate sections alienated from it by successive waves of Islamic, Christian and modern Western imperialism. And Indian culture has become a mechanical mixture of odds and ends, indigenous and imported, rather than a homogeneous whole created by a vast spiritual vision which is finding itself ill at ease with incompatible impositions.

It was this version of India's history which gave a good conscience to the British imperialist while he pulverised Hindu society, plundered Hindu wealth and poured undisguised contempt on Hindu culture. It was this version of India's history which emasculated Hindu society and emboldened the residues of Islamic imperialism to stage street riots and then walk away with precious parts of the Hindu homeland, thus consolidating an aggression which had not succeeded even though mounted again and again for more than a thousand years. It is this version of India's history which is being invoked by the fifth-columns of Islam, Christianity, and Communism, each of which looks forward to a final conquest of this country with the help of foreign finances and, if need be, foreign firearms. And it is this version of India's history which is being promoted by power-hungry politicians who woo the Muslim vote-bank while they divide Hindu society into mutually hostile camps.

PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Hindu society owes it to its own survival in the present and to the prosperity of its future generations to repudiate this perverse version of India's history, and to put the record straight so that no one dares divorce Hindu spirituality from Hindu heroism, Hindu nation from the Hindu homeland, and Hindu culture from the national culture of India. Hindu saints, sages and scholars in general and Hindu historians in particular have to come forward to do their duty towards their society and culture and to pay homage to their ancient heritage. Hindu *Dharmashāstras* have enjoined upon every Hindu to repay according to his or her capacity the *rishi-riṇa*, that is, the debt we owe to our seers and sages, by passing on to the next generation the Veda and the Itihāsa-Purāṇa, that is, the spiritual and cultural vision of Sanatana Dharma and the historical tradition of Hindu heroism. In the present situation, that is perhaps also the best way to repay the *pitri-riṇa*, that is, the debt we owe to our forefathers for the protection, preservation and perpetuation of our great Hindu society and its continuously creative culture.

The latest scholar and historian to repay the *rishi-riṇa* in an ample measure is Dr. Ram Gopal Misra whose monograph has been published recently.[1]

The book is small in size. But it is packed with painstaking research, and is thus a solid and substantial contribution to the history of a comparatively obscure period of Indian history. What is more important is the perspective. "The present thesis," writes Dr. Misra in his Preface, "is an attempt to provide a connected account of the *prolonged and sustained efforts made by Indians to stem the tide of early Muslim invaders.* The political and military resistance was spread over more than five and half centuries till its final collapse in northern India in the last decade of the 12th Century A.D. For long, historians have emphasised

1. Ram Gopal Misra, *Indian Resistance to Early Muslim Invaders Upto 1206 A.D.*, Anu Books, Shivaji Road, Meerut city, 1983. The book has been reprinted in 1992.

merely the ultimate collapse of the Indians, ignoring completely the resistance offered by them. *It is a fact of history that such sustained resistance as encountered by the Muslim arms in India was not faced by them in any other land conquered by them....* The Indian resistance had another facet, which was the outcome of the resolute determination of the Indians to preserve their religious and cultural identity. While country after country, from the straits of Gibralter to the banks of the Indus, witnessed the rapid Islamization of their individual cultures, even Northern India managed to survive as a predominantly 'heathen' land even after five centuries of Muslim rule."[2]

THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Misra's monograph deals with a specific period limited in its time-span. But the perspective he provides in processing this period is pertinent to the entire panorama of Indian history. For long, India has been depicted as a no-man's-land which invader after invader has claimed as an easy prize, and into which diverse races, religions, and cultures have acquired an equal legitimacy. Dr. Misra rejects this perspective effectively and forcefully when he portrays India as the homeland of an ancient people who are united by a distinct and deeply spiritual culture, and who are prepared to fight and defy death in defence of their patrimony. The national perspective that thus emerges from Dr. Misra's monograph is relevant not only to a correct reading of India's past but also to a correct appraisal of India's present-day politics.

This national perspective on India's history had been alive and active in our national consciousness all through the long-drawn-out struggle against Islamic imperialism, though it had expressed itself more as a religious and cultural idiom than as a political ideology. It had come into sharp focus in course of the Swadeshi Movement (1905-09) when the brave resistance offered by the Rajputs and the turning of tables by the Marathas

2. Emphasis added.

and the Sikhs, had become a backdrop for the freedom fight being waged against British imperialism. The residues of Islamic imperialism like the Aligarh school of Muslim politicians had taken fright at this re-affirmation of the national perspective, and sought protection from the British against the rising tide of Indian nationalism.

POLITICS PERVERTS HISTORY

It was only later on that the national perspective was frowned upon by a political leadership which was out to seek Muslim support for the national movement as a short-cut to a quick and peaceful transfer of power. The Muslim support failed to materialise. Instead, Islamic imperialism became parasitic on the national movement, and continued to fatten till it succeeded in partitioning the country. But in the process, the national perspective on Indian history stood subverted in all its essentials. We are now paying the price in the from of renewed aggression from Islamic imperialism, and the growing fissiparous tendencies within the national fold.

The national perspective had become diluted when some scribes, patronised by an opportunist or self-alienated political leadership, had started parading Siraj-ud-Dawla, Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan and Bahadur Shah, the last Mughal, as Indian patriots, and pillorying Mir Jafar and Omichand as traitors. It had become distorted when the Mughal empire had begun to be depicted as a native political system in which its victims, the Hindus, were harangued to take as much pride as they had done earlier in the Maurya, the Andhra, and the Gupta empires. And it had suffered a total perversion when the Mamluks, the Khaljis, the Tughlaqs, the Sayyads, the Lodis and the Bahmanis were transformed into indigenous dynasties on par with the Maukharis, the Rashtrakutas, the Chalukyas, the Chandellas, the Chauhans, and so on. In the process, the bulkwarks of national resistance like Mewar and Vijayanagar were reduced to puny Hindu principali-

ties on par with provinces ruled by Muslim governors, and indomitable freedom fighters like Rana Pratap and Shivaji were cut down to the size of local chieftains on par with Muslim rebels who frequently ran foul of their imperial overlords at Delhi or Agra.

INSIDIOUS IMAGE OF HINDU PERSONALITY

Still more serious was the emergence of an insidious image of Hindu personality as a direct result of this loss of the national perspective on Indian history. In due course, most Hindus, particularly the English-educated Hindu elite, have been made to believe that a Hindu is not true to himself nor to his religion and culture unless he 1) honours as his own heroes all those invaders and crusaders who demolished his temples, desecrated the images of his Gods and Goddesses, burnt his Shāstras, humiliated his holy men, dishonoured his women, pillaged his property, massacred his countrymen *en masse*, sold his children into slavery, trampled upon every symbol of his religion and culture, and coerced his co-religionists to swear by an aggressive and intolerant dogma glorified as the *Kalima;* 2) shows reverence for an ideology of calculated and cold-blooded gangesterism masquerading as the only true religion; 3) pays homage to all those pretenders, scoundrels, and hoodlums which this ideology presents as its sufis, saints and heroes; 4) practises patience and tolerance towards those who vow openly and work ceaselessly to destroy his religion and culture, and to take forcible possession of his homeland; and 5) is always prepared to surrender everything he possesses or cherishes in order to avoid violence and bloodshed.

HISTORY OF HINDU HEROISM

Dr. Misra is one of those few historians who have helped Hindu society not only to recover the national perspective on Indian history but also to resurrect the heroic image of Hindu personality. In giving a blow by blow account of how Hindus

fought tenaciously and for a long time for every inch of their homeland in the face of an inveterate enemy inspired by a diabolical creed, he has brought out in bold relief not only the fact that Hindus were second to none when it came to making sacrifices for their motherland but also the fact that Hindus were fighting in defence of something which they valued above their very lives. "The early successes of Islam," he writes, "were against religions which had lost their hold on the minds of the people. But in India the Hindu way of life, symbolised by high moral values of tolerance, truthfulness and justice was very much the part and parcel of the multitude's mental and material being. These eternal and moral values of life which constitute the core of Hinduism were to sustain it in the next five centuries of Muslim and another two centuries of British rule. *The conclusion, therefore, seems inescapable that much of the decline in social and moral values of Hindu society is the result and not the cause of their foreign subjugation.*"[3]

INDIGENOUS SOURCES OF INDIAN HISTORY

His book has 8 chapters besides an Introduction and a Conclusion. The most important chapter to my mind is Chapter V in which he has reproduced, with English translation and explanatory comments, a selection of Sanskrit inscriptions from different places in India ranging from Hansi in Haryana to Gauhati in Assam, and from Badaun in Uttar Pradesh to Nagpur in Maharashtra. These inscriptions refer to significant events which have been either not cited or suppressed by medieval Muslim historians upon whom modern historians have depended so far for narration of events in that period. "Exclusive dependence on Persian and Arabic sources," observes Dr. Misra, "for an account of Muslim invasions, is apt to produce an unbalanced view. The basic prejudices of the Muslim historians, who mostly belonged

3. Ibid., p. 9. Emphasis added.

to the Ulema class, against other religions, make them reject any other account, however authentic, if it tends to subvert their basic belief in the might of Islam. The victories of the arms of Islam have been elaborately described while the reverses have either been conveniently omitted or painted as having ended in negotiations and tribute. Even when described, only minor details are made available."[4]

In the articles that follow I will summarise Dr. Misra's account of Hindu heroism spread over several centuries.

4. Ibid., p. 64.

CHAPTER II
ARAB FAILURE IN SINDH, KABUL AND ZABUL

In Chapter I of his book, Dr. Misra gives dates as well as details regarding the rapid conquests made by the armies of Islam after the death of its prophet in AD 632. The Byzantine provinces of Palestine and Syria fell to them after a six month's campaign in AD 636-637. Next came the turn of the Sassanid empire of Persia which included Iraq, Iran, and Khorasan. The Persians were defeated decisively in AD 637, and their entire empire was overrun in the next few years. "By A.D. 643 the boundaries of the Caliphate touched the frontiers of India."[1] The Turkish speaking territories of Inner Mongolia, Bukhara, Tashkand, and Samarkand, etc. were annexed by AD 650. Meanwhile, in the west, the Byzantine province of Egypt had fallen in AD 640-641. The Arab armies marched over North Africa till they reached the Atlantic and crossed over into Spain in AD 709.

These were not mere territorial conquests. Dr. Misra observes: "Astonishing as these victories of Islamic armies were, equally amazing was the ease and rapidity with which people of different creeds and races were assimilated within the Islamic fold. Syrians, Persians, Berbers, Turks and others — all were rapidly Islamised and their language and culture Arabicised."[2] He also quotes an appropriate passage of the Quran which had inspired the Arabs to decimate and denationalise those who were defeated by them: "Fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them and lie in wait for them in every stratagem till they repeat and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity."[3]

The same Islamic armies, however, had to struggle for 69 long years to make their first effective breach in the borders of

1. Ibid., p. 3.
2. Ibid., p. 4.
3. Quran, 11.5.

India. In the next three centuries, they pushed forward in several provinces of Northern and Western India. But at the end of it all, India was far from being conquered militarily or assimilated culturally. The Arab invasion of India ended in a more or less total failure. Dr. Misra tells the full story in the next two chapters of his book.

ARAB FAILURE IN SINDH

The Arab invasion of Sindh started soon after their first two naval expeditions against Thana on the coast of Maharashtra and Broach on the coast of Gujarat, had been repulsed in the reign of Caliph Umar (AD 634-644). The expedition against Debal in Sindh met the same fate "The leader of the Arab army, Mughairah, was defeated and killed."[4] Umar decided to send another army by land against Makran which was at that time a part of the kingdom of Sindh. But he was advised by the governor of Iraq that "he should think no more of Hind".[5] The next Caliph, Usman (AD 646-656), followed the same advice and refrained from sending any expedition against Sindh, either by land or by sea. The fourth Caliph, Ali (AD 656-661), sent an expedition by land in AD 660. But the leader of this expedition and "those who were with him, saving a few, were slain in the land of Kikan in the year AH 42 (AD 662)". Thus the four "pious" Caliphs of Islam died without hearing the news of a victory over "Sindh or Hind".

Muawiyah, the succeeding Caliph (AD 661-680), sent as many as six expeditions by land. All of them were repulsed with great slaughter except the last one which succeeded in occupying Makran in AD 680. For the next 28 years, the Arabs did not dare send another army against Sindh. The next expedition was despatched to take Debal in AD 708. Its two successive commanders, Ubaidullah and Budail, were killed and the Arab army was

4. Ram Gopal Misra, op. cit., p. 11.
5. Ibid., p. 12.

routed. When Hajjaj, the governor of Iraq, asked the Caliph for permission to send another expedition, the Caliph wrote back: "This affair will be a source of great anxiety and so we must put it off, for every time an army goes, [vast] numbers of Mussalmans are killed. So think no more of such a design."[6]

But Hajjaj was a very tenacious imperialist. He spent the next four years in equipping an army more formidable than any which had so far been sent against Sindh. While sending off his nephew as well as son-in-law, Muhammad bin Qasim, with this army in AD 712, Hajjaj said: "I swear by Allah that I am determined to spend the whole wealth of Iraq, that is in my possession, on this expedition."[7] Muhammad was successful in overcoming the fierce resistance he met at every step in his progress through Sindh. By AD 713 he had occupied the whole of this province as well as Multan. He was helped to a certain extent by the treachery of some merchants and local governors at a few places. But as soon as he was recalled in AD 714, "the people of India rebelled, and threw off their yoke, and the country from Debalpur to the Salt Sea only remained under the dominions of the Khalifa."[8] This was only a narrow coastal strip.

Subsequently, the Islamic armies reconquered Sindh, and advanced through Rajputana upto Ujjain in the east and Broach in the south. "But the success of the Arab armies was short-lived. Their advance to the south was signally checked by the Chalukya ruler of Lat (S. Gujarat), Pulakesin Avani-Janasraya. The Navasari inscription (A.D. 738) records that Pulakesin defeated a Tajika (Arab) army which had defeated the kingdoms of Sindhu, Cutch, Saurashtra, Cavotaka, Maurya and Gurjara and advanced as far south as Navasari where this prince was ruling at this time. The prince's heroic victory earned him the titles of 'solid Pillar of Dakshinapatha (*Dakshinapatha-sadhata*) and the

6. Ibid., p. 14.
7. Ibid., p. 15.
8. Ibid., p. 17

Repeller of the Unrepellable (*Anivarttaka-nivartayi*)'. The Gwalior inscription of the Gurjara-Pratihar King, Bhoja I, tells us that Nagabhatta I, the founder of the family who ruled in Avanti (Malwa) around A.D. 725, 'defeated the army of a powerful Mlechha ruler who invaded his dominions'.[9] The Gurjara-Pratiharas were known to the Arab historians as 'kings of Jurz'. Referring to one of these kings, an Arab historian wrote that 'Among the princes of India there is no greater foe of the Mohammaden faith than he'."[10]

The Arabs also made advances to the north of Sindh into the Punjab and towards Kashmir. Here they were blocked and driven back by Lalitaditya Muktapida (AD 724-760) of Kashmir. He was in alliance with Yasodharman of Central India. "He is said to have ordered the Turushkas to shave off half of their heads as a symbol of their submission." Dr. Misra cites Biladhuri who wrote that "the Mussalmans retired from several parts of India and left some of their positions, nor have they upto the present advanced so far as in days gone by".[11] And he mourned, "The people of India returned to idolatry with the exception of the inhabitants of Qasbah. A place of refuge to which the Moslems might flee was not to be found, so he [Arab governor] built on the further side of the lake, where it borders on al-Hind, a city which he named at-Mahfuzah [the protected] establishing it as a place of refuge for them, where they should be secure and making it a capital."[12]

Arab travellers to India of the 10th century "all speak of only two independent Arab principalities with Multan and Mansurah as their capitals". The Pratihara kings waged constant war "against the Arab prince of Multan, and with the Mussalmans, his subjects on the frontier". Multan would have been lost by the

9. Ibid., p. 18.
10. Ibid., p. 4.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 20.

Arabs but for a Hindu temple. Dr. Misra quotes Al-Istakhri who wrote about AD 951 that in Multan "there is an idol held in great veneration by the Hindus and every year people from distant parts undertake pilgrimages to it...When the Indians make war upon them and endeavour to seize the idol, the inhabitants [Arabs] bring it out pretending that they will break it and burn it. Upon this the Indians retire, otherwise they would destroy Multan." Finally, he observes: "Thus after three centuries of unremitting effort, we find the Arab dominion in India limited to two petty states of Multan and Mansurah. And here, too, they could exist only after renouncing their iconoclastic zeal and utilizing the idols for their own political ends. It is a very strange sight to see them seeking shelter behind the very *budds*, they came here to destroy."[13]

It has to be kept in mind all along that the Arab empire in this period was the mightiest power on earth. Compared to this monolithic and highly militarised giant, the Hindu principalities of Sindh and other border areas were no better than pygmies. Yet the pygmies had the last laugh at the end of the 10th century when the Islamised Turks took over from the Arabs the Islamic crusade against "Sind and Hind". It was the old story of Alexander and the small republics of the Punjab and Sindh, all over again.

INSIDE STORY OF ARAB "LIBERALISM"

Dr. Misra concludes his chapter on Sindh with a very meaningful note. "From a political or missionary point of view," he writes, "the Arab conquest of Sindh was certainly a minor affair. The Arab conquest of other countries, outside India, had been followed by wholesale conversions and supplanting of local institutions by Islamic ones...The Islamic law had divided unbelievers into two classes, viz., the People of the Book (*Ahl-i-*

12. Ibid., p. 20.
13. Ibid., p. 21.

Kitab), the possessors of Scriptures — the Jews and the Christians — and the idolaters. The former were not to be lawfully molested in any way so long as they accepted the rule of the conquerors and paid the Jezia. But for the idolaters, the choice was between Islam and death. In Central Asia, the idolaters had been rooted out. But this experiment failed in Sindh as Islam was confronted with a faith which, though idolatrous, defied death and looked at life in this world as one link in the eternal chain of births and deaths. The experiment was only tried at Debal where the 'temples were demolished and mosques founded; a general massacre endured for three days, prisoners were taken captive; plunder was amassed'. Thus under compulsion of events, the stern code of Islam was relaxed, the Hindus were allowed to rebuild their temples and perform their worship and the three per cent which had been allowed to the priests under the former government was not discontinued."[14]

Many historians, particularly the apologists for Islam, have presented this expediency as a proof of Islamic liberalism under the early Arabs. They have contrasted this Arab "liberalism" with the "fanaticism" of the Turks who joined the fold of Islam at a later stage. Dr. Misra does not make this mistake. He has laid bare the true motivation at the back of this "liberalism", and thus restored the perspective on the plasticity of Islamic polity in the over-all framework of the fundamental Islamic law regarding treatment of non-believers. The mullahs and sufis of Islam might have howled over this dilution of the dogma. But the military and political leaders always knew when and where to make a compromise in the interests of self-preservation, and till the next stage of aggrandisement arrived in the vicissitudes of war. Lenin has also exhorted the party to know exactly when to practise tactics of retreat. Islam, after all, is Communism plus Allah, as Allami Iqbal has observed so aptly.

14. Ibid., p. 22.

HEROIC DEFENCE OF KABUL AND ZABUL

The same story was repeated by the Hindu kingdoms of Kabul (Kapisa) and Zabul (Jabal) which lay to the north-west of Sindh, and which the Islamic armies had started attacking soon after they annexed Khorasan in AD 643. It was in AD 650 that the first Islamic army penetrated deep into Zabul by way of Seistan, which at that time was a part of India territorially as well as culturally. The struggle was grim and prolonged. The Islamic army suffered heavy losses. In the final round, the invader was defeated and driven out.

Another attack followed in AD 653. The Arab general, Abdul Rahman, was able to conquer Zabul and levy tribute from Kabul. The king of Kabul, however, proved desultory in paying regularly what the Arabs thought to be their due. Finally, another Arab general, Yazid ibn Ziyad who had been the governor of Seistan for some time, attempted retribution in AD 683. He was killed by the Hindus, and his army was put to flight with great slaughter. The Arabs lost Seistan also, and had to pay 5,00,000 *dirhams* to get one of their generals, Abu Ubaida, released.

But the Arabs, inspired as they were by an imperialist ideology, did not give up. They recovered Seistan some time before AD 692. Its new governor, Abdullah, invaded Kabul. The Hindus trapped the Arab army in the mountain passes after allowing it to advance unopposed for some distance. Abdullah agreed to cease hostilities, and the king of Kabul agreed to renew payment of an annual tribute. But the treaty was denounced by the Caliph who dismissed Abdullah. The war against Kabul was renewed in AD 695 when Hajjaj became the governor of Iraq. He sent an army under Ubaidullah, the new governor of Seistan. Ubaidullah was defeated and forced to retreat after leaving his three sons as hostages and promising that "he shall not fight as long as he was governor".[15] Once again, the treaty was denounced by the Caliph, and another general, Shuraih, tried to advance upon Kabul. He

15. Ibid., p. 29.

was killed by the Hindus, and his army suffered huge losses as it retreated through the desert of Bust. Poor Ubaidullah died of grief. That was the third round won by the Hindu kingdom of Kabul.

In the next round, Hajjaj commissioned Abdul Rahman once again. He made some conquests but could not consolidate his hold. Hajjaj threatened to supersede him. Abdul Rahman revolted and entered into a treaty with the Hindu king to "carry arms against his master".[16] The treaty did not work, and Abdul Rahman committed suicide. The Hindu king, however, continued the war. Masudi, the Arab historian, "makes mention of a prince in the valley of the Indus who after having subjugated Eastern Persia, advanced to the bank of the Tigris and Euphrates".[17] Hajjaj had to make peace according to which the Hindu king was entitled to keep his kingdom in exchange for an annual tribute. The Hindu king, however, stopped payment in the reign of Caliph Sulayman (AD 715-717). Some attempts to force him into submission were made in the reign of Caliph Al-Mansur (AD 745-775). But they met with only partial success, and we find the Hindus ruling over Kabul and Zabul in the year AD 867. The Arabs had failed once again to conquer finally another small Hindu principality, in spite of their being the mightiest power on earth. The struggle had lasted for more than two hundred years.

The kingdom of Kabul suffered a temporary eclipse in AD 870 but not on account of the Arabs, nor as a result of a clash of arms. The Turkish adventurer, Yaqub bin Layth, "who started his career as a robber in Seistan and later on founded the Saffarid dynasty of Persia", sent a message to the king of Kabul that he wanted to come and pay his homage. The king was deceived into welcoming Yaqub and a band of the latter's armed followers in the court at Kabul. Yaqub "bowed his head as if to do homage but he raised the lance and thrust it into the back of Rusal so that he died on the spot". A Turkish army then invaded the Hindu

16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 30.

kingdoms of both Kabul and Zabul. The king of Zabul was killed in the battle, and the population was converted to Islam by force. That was a permanent loss to India. But the succeeding Hindu king of Kabul who had meanwhile transferred his capital to Udbhandapur on the Indus, recovered Kabul after the Saffarid dynasty declined. Masudi who visited the Indus Valley in AD 915 "designates the prince who ruled at Kabul by the same title as he held when the Arabs penetrated for the first time into this region".[18]

The Hindus lost Kabul for good only in the closing decade of the 10th century. In AD 963 Alaptigin, a Turkish slave of the succeeding Samanid dynasty, had been able to establish an independent Muslim principality in Kabul with his seat at Ghazni. It was his general and successor, Subuktigin, who conquered Kabul after a struggle spread over two decades. The Hindus under king Jayapala of Udbhandapur made a bold bid to recapture Kabul in AD 986-987. A confederate Hindu army to which the Rajas of Delhi, Ajmer, Kalinjar and Kanauj has contributed troops and money, advanced into the heartland of the Islamic kingdom of Ghazni. "According to Utbi, the battle lasted several days and the warriors of Subuktigin, including prince Mahmood, were 'reduced to despair.' But a snow-storm and rains upset the plans of Jayapala who opened negotiations for peace. He sent the following message to Subuktigin: 'You have heard and know the nobleness of Indians — they fear not death or destruction... In affairs of honour and renown we would place ourselves upon the fire like roast meat, and upon the dagger like the sunrays.'"[19] But the peace thus concluded proved temporary. The Muslims resumed the offensive and the Hindus were defeated and driven out of Kabul. Dr. Mishra concludes with the comment that Jayapala "was perhaps the last Indian ruler to show such spirit of aggression, so sadly lacking in later Rajput kings".[20]

18. Ibid., p. 32.
19. Ibid., p. 33.
20. Ibid., p. 34.

CHAPTER III
FRUSTRATION OF THE GHAZNAVIDS

The standard text-books of Indian history taught in our schools and colleges do not highlight at all the stupendous failure of the Islamised Arabs in the face of heroic Hindu resistance. What they highlight instead is the series of successful raids made by Mahmud Ghaznavi into the heartland of India, and the subsequent crumbling of Hindu kingdoms in North India before the determined onslaughts of Muhammad Ghuri. The two Islamic invaders are presented as the rulers of a small sultanate in Afghanistan as against the powerful Hindu kingdoms of the Shahiyas, the Gurjara-Pratiharas, the Paramaras, the Rashtrakutas, the Chandellas, the Chaulukyas, the Chauhans, the Gahadvads, and the Senas. The impression that is left at the end of it all is that northern India was more or less a walk-over for the "warriors of Islam".

Dr. Misra however, cites solid facts, recorded mostly by Muslim historians of medieval India, which tell an entirely different story. That is what makes Chapters 4 and 5 of his book a most rewarding reading. The Ghaznavids and the Ghurids in this story are not rulers of small principalities; they are formidable powers with the resources of vast empires at their disposal. The perspective is thus restored once again.

MYTHS ABOUT MAHMUD GHAZNAVI

Muslim historians have floated two myths about Mahmud Ghaznavi who had succeeded his father, Subuktigin, in AD 997, and who became famous for his 12 or, according to another count, 17 invasions of India. The first myth is that he was interested primarily in demolishing Hindu temples, breaking Hindu idols, capturing prisoners of war, and amassing wealth by plunder, and that he did not harbour any serious intention of building an empire in India. But the very fact that he had annexed to his

empire — spread over Khorasan, Iran, Iraq, and most of Central Asia — the Shahiya domain in the North-West and the Punjab as also Multan, which was a Muslim principality at that time, goes to prove that he would not have hesitated in doing the same to other parts of northern and western India, had he found it feasible. He failed in this design not because he lacked the intention but because he met a very stiff resistance in these parts. It is true that his superior military might and skill as a commander succeeded in defeating, in the initial encounters, most of the Hindu princes he met on the field of battle. But the rising tide of resistance in the wake of every victory threatened to engulf him soon after, with the result that he had to content himself with plunder and prisoners of war, and relinquish the coveted territories.

The second myth, which has been built up to bolster the first, presents India as if it was an open country which he could enter and leave as and when he pleased. But this myth also is not supported by the facts of recorded history. Dr. Misra observes: "The contemporary Muslim historians seem to imply that Mahmud's armies easily vanquished the infidel armies and there was no opposition worth the name. But a closer scrutiny of all available sources, contemporary and later, reveals a different story."[1]

THE SHAHIYA STRUGGLE WITH MAHMUD

Mahmud led his first invasion against the Shahiyas of Udbhandapur in AD 1001 when he advanced upon Peshawar. Raja Jayapala was caught unawares, and could not mobilise all his forces in time. The lack of a standing army was to prove the undoing of many Hindu princes in days to come. In contrast, the Muslim militarists always maintained their armed hordes in a permanent state of mobilisation. Even so, the Hindus fought an obstinate battle in the face of overwhelming odds. They, how-

1. Ibid., p. 45.

ever, depended upon slow moving elephants which proved a poor match for the highly mobile Muslim cavalry. They were defeated and Jayapala himself was made captive. But Mahmud did not dare annex any Indian territory. He released Jayapala in exchange for fifty elephants. He had had a taste of Hindu heroism, and beat a hasty retreat. On the other hand, Jayapala thought himself unworthy of the throne he occupied, and burnt himself on a funeral pyre to which he set fire with his own hands. This was a demonstration of the Hindu sense of honour, which no defeated Muslim marauder could ever match.

Jayapala's successor, Anandapala, proved equally valiant. He refused passage to Mahmud's armies on their way to Multan in AD 1005-06. This led to a battle which Anandapala lost. His son, Sukhapala, was taken prisoner and converted to Islam. Mahmud had to rush back to Ghazni to meet an attack from the west. He left his Indian possessions in the hands of Sukhapala who, however, soon returned to the Hindu fold. Here was an opportunity for Anandapala to attack the Sultan from the east. But Anandapala proved too magnanimous to take advantage of the difficulty in which his adversary was placed. Instead, he offered to go to the aid of Mahmud with a sizable force. "Anandapala thus lost the only chance of crushing an enemy and was soon to pay the penalty."[2]

Mahmud invaded India again in AD 1008. According to Firishta, quoted by Dr. Misra, Anandapala "sent ambassadors on all sides inviting assistance of other princes of Hindustan, who now considered the expulsion of Mohammadans from India as a sacred duty. Accordingly the Rajas of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar, Kanauj, Delhi and Ajmer entered into a confederacy and collecting their forces advanced towards Punjab...The Indians and Mohammedans...remained encamped [at Waihind] for forty days without coming into action...The Hindu women, on this occasion, sold their jewels and melted down their gold ornaments to

2. Ibid., p. 37.

furnish resources for the war." Mahmud "ordered six thousand archers to the front to endeavour to provoke the enemy to attack his entrenchments". The Khokhars "penetrated into Mohammadan lines where a dreadful carnage ensued and 5000 Mohammadans in a few minutes were slain". Utbi admits that "the battle lasted from morning till evening and the infidels were near gaining victory".[3] Firishta reports that Mahmud "saw his plight and sent some of his elite warriors to attack the elephant on which Anandapala was sitting and directing the contest". The elephant took fright from "the naptha balls and flights of arrows and turned and fled".[4] That broke the morale of the Hindu army. It was neither the first nor the last occasion on which the Hindu army became an uncontrollable rabble and suffered defeat and slaughter simply because the elephant carrying its commander turned tail. The Muslim armies were more disciplined.

The Shahiya dynasty now established a new capital at Nandana in the Salt Range. They contested every inch against subsequent raids of Mahmud. The next battle took place in AD 1013. Trilochanapala who had meanwhile succeeded Anandapala, retired into the hills of Kashmir where the Prime Minister of that kingdom came to his help with a large army. Kalhaṇa has described this battle in glowing terms in his *Rājataraṅgiṇī.* Utbi writes that "the action lasted for several days without intermission", and that the Hindus lost it only when they "were drawn into the plain to fight, like oil sucked up into the wick of the candle". Kalhana concludes: "Even after he had obtained his victory, the Hammira did not breathe freely, thinking of the superhuman prowess of the illustrious Trilochanapala."[5]

The Shahiya king with his son, Bhimapala (known as Nidar Bhima), now established a new seat at Lohara (Lohkot) on the border of Kashmir. Mahmud tried to storm it in AD 1015. Firishta tells us that "this was the first disaster that the Sultan

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 38.
5. Ibid., p. 41.

suffered in his campaigns against India. After some days he extricated himself with great difficulty from his peril, and reached Ghazni without having achieved any success."[6] For obvious reasons, comments Dr. Misra, the contemporary Muslim historians do not mention this particular expedition.

The Shahiyas were no longer in a position to arrest the forward march of Mahmud. Nor was Mahmud in a position to dislodge them from Lohara so long as a single scion of the dynasty remained alive. "Trilochanapala was killed in A.D. 1021, and his son Bhimapala five years later (A.D. 1026)", fighting Mahmud all along at different places and in league with different Hindu princes. Years later, Alberuni wrote: "The Hindu Shahiya dynasty is now extinct, and of the whole house there is no longer the slightest remnant in existence. We must say that, in all their grandeur, they never slackened in the ardent desire of doing that which is good and right, that they were men of noble sentiment and noble bearing." Dr. Misra observes: "The Shahis fought with valour and tenacity for nearly fifty years. They ultimately collapsed against the repeated onslaughts of the Turks, led by one of the greatest generals their race has produced but not before three generations of the Shahi kings had sacrificed themselves on the battlefield."[7]

MAHMUD FAILS AGAINST THE CHANDELLAS

The next Hindu dynasty to offer resolute resistance to Mahmud Ghaznavi was that of the Chandellas of Kalanjar and Khajuraho. The Chandella contemporary of Mahmud was Raja Vidyadhara. He had fought and killed Rajyapala, the Gurjara-Pratihara ruler of Kanauj, for abjectly "surrendering his territories to the Musalmans". Trilochanapala and his son, Bhimapala had joined him along with several other Hindu princes in order to stem the tide of Islamic invasion. The Ghaznavi marched

6. Ibid., p. 46.
7. Ibid., p. 41.

against Vidyadhara in AD 1018. "He sent a messenger to Nanda (as Vidyadhara was called by the Muslims) asking him to become a Muslim and save himself from all harm and distress. Nanda returned the reply that he had nothing to say to Mahmud except on the battlefield."[8] Mahmud ascended an elevated spot to survey the Hindu host. According to Nizamuddin Ahmad, a medieval historian, "Then when he saw what a vast host it was, *he repented of his coming and, placing the forehead of supplication on the ground of submission and humility, prayed for victory.*"[9] Fortunately for him, the Hindus did not engage him in battle immediately; they made a strategic retreat. Mahmud also promptly "set out for Ghazni". He had obtained neither plunder, nor prisoners of war. Hindus could have destroyed him had they pursued him in his retreat. But that was a vision which Hindus had lost. Pursuit of a retreating enemy was contrary to the Rajput code of honour.

The Hindu confederacy also seems to have dispersed soon after. So Mahmud did not have to face a united Hindu host when he again invaded Chandella territory in AD 1022. He laid siege to the fort of Gwalior to start with but "failed to take it after investing it for forty days and nights". Next he advanced on Kalanjar. "This time also Mahmud failed to force a conclusion and the campaign ended in mutual gifts and compliments... Later Muslim historians have tried to represent this exchange of complimentaries as tribute. Evidently, Mahmud had to be satisfied with only a verse and a few elephants."[10] He never paid another visit to Chandella territory.

SUBSEQUENT TO THE RAID ON SOMANATH

Dr. Mishra has also given a detailed account of Hindu heroism in defence of Somanath which Mahmud had attacked in AD

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8. Ibid., p. 47
9. Ibid. Emphasis added.
10. Ibid., p. 48.

1026. According to Firishta, "The battle raged with great fury, victory was long doubtful."[11] According to another Muslim account, "Fifty thousand infidels were killed round about the temple." Dr. Misra comments: "The like of this faith which inspired these fifty thousand sons of the soil to embrace death will be hard to find in the annals of any other land."[12]

Mahmud succeeded in demolishing the sacred image, and plundering the temple treasury. But the rallying of Hindu forces from far and near frightened him into beating a hasty retreat. He dared not return by the road he had traversed on his way to Somanath. Gardizi writes: "Param Dev, Badshah of the Hindus, stood in his way disputing his path. *Mahmud decided, therefore, to leave the right road back to Ghazni from fear lest this great victory of his should turn into defeat.* He left by way of Multan and Mansurah... Many of the soldiers of Islam lost their lives in this way."[13] The Hindu king under reference was either Chaulukya Bhimadeva I of Gujarat or Paramara Bhoja of Malwa "who was known to be a sturdy champion of Hinduism". Dr. Misra has reconstructed the military manoeuvres of this king which make an interesting study. Also the story of two guides who led the Muslim army into a desert trap at the cost of their lives.

The Jats of Sindh had "molested his army during his retreat from Somanath." So Mahmud's next expedition was organised against them. The Jats were very powerful and, according to one Muslim account, "They had invaded the principality of Mansura and forced its Musalman Amir to abjure his religion."[14] Mahmud is reported to have mobilized a large number of boats to fight the Jats who had taken to the river. But the whole account, says Dr. Misra, "smacks of unreality". Girdizi mentions only "one camp of refugee families whom the Muslim army robbed". This

11. Ibid., p. 49.
12. Ibid., p. 50.
13. Ibid. Emphasis added.
14. Ibid., p. 52.

amounts to an admission that the expedition ended in failure.

SUCCESSORS OF MAHMUD

Muslim generals under Masud, Mahmud's successor, led some raids into farther India from their base in the Punjab. One of them was Ahmad Nialtigin. He surprised Benares, stayed there for a day, and returned with plunder. Another general, Salar Masud who was a son of Mahmud's sister, reached up to Bahraich in north U.P. where he and his large army were surrounded by Hindu princes, and destroyed. Hindu princes now took the offensive against the Muslim invaders. Dr. Misra cities Firishta as follows: "In the year A.H. 435 (A.D. 1043) the Raja of Delhy, in conjunction with other Rajas took Hansy, Thanesur, and other dependencies from the governors to whom Modood (the successor of Masud) had entrusted them. The Hindus from thence marched towards the fort of Nagarkota [Kangra] which they besieged for four months and the garrison being distressed for provisions and no succour coming from Lahore was under the necessity of capitulating. The Hindus according to their practice erected new idols...The successor of the Raja of Delhy gave such confidence to the Indian chiefs of Punjab and other places that...they put on the aspect of lions. Three of these Rajas advanced and invested Lahore."[15] In the final round, Hindus failed to take Lahore. But they kept their hold over other places in the Punjab for quite some time.

The Muslims renewed their raids after Prince Mahmud, the son of Sultan Ibrahim of Ghazni, was appointed governor of Lahore in AD 1075. Meanwhile, Bhoja Paramara had died in AD 1055 and Raja Karna Kalchuri in AD 1072. Both these princes were dreaded by the Muslims. Prince Mahmud was defeated and driven away by Lakshmadeva, the Paramara ruler of Ujjain. Mahmud also tried to take Kalanjar. But the Chandellas again proved more than a match for the army of Islam. Muslim histo-

15. Ibid., p. 54-55.

rians record only his safe return from Hindustan, and thank Allah!

Ibrahim's successor, Masud III (AD 1099-1115), fared no better. The armies of Islam were defeated repeatedly by Govindachandra, the Gahadavad ruler of Kanauj. Inscriptions of Hindu princes around this period "speak again and again of the rout of Turushka armies. These may refer either to the failure of feeble attempts which might have still been made by the Yamini (Ghaznavid) kings to extend their dominions in India or to the extermination of isolated pockets of Muslim domination beyond the Punjab."[16]

One of the worst defeats suffered by the Muslims was at the hands of Arnoraja, the Chauhan ruler of Ajmer (AD 1133-1151). "The Muslim commander fled before the Chauhans. Muslim soldiers died of exhaustion and an equal number perished from thirst. Their bodies lay along the path of retreat and were burnt by the villagers. A Chauhan *prasasti* of Ajmer Museum, line 15, states: 'The land of Ajmer, soaked with the blood of the Turushkas, looked as if it had dressed itself in a dress of deep red colour to celebrate the victory of her lord.'"[17]

A Hindu counter-attack was launched after Vigraharaja (AD 1153-1164), the successor to Arnoraja, conquered Delhi and Hansi from the Tomaras. "His repeated victories led him to the claim of 'having rendered Aryavarta worthy of its name by the repeated extermination of the Mlechhas.' All territories south of the river Sutlej seem to have been freed from Muslim rule."[18]

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16. Ibid., p. 60.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 60-61.

CHAPTER IV
PERFIDY WINS WHERE VALOUR FAILED

The theologians of Islam had laid down, in the opening years of this imperialist ideology, that the *kāfirs* who could not be subdued by force should be subverted by fraud. The prophet of Islam had himself initiated the first lessons in this lore when he practised what came to be known as *Siyāsat-i-Madīnah* in later times, that is, to take the *kāfirs* one by one and that too when they are least expecting an attack. One of his famous sayings, sanctified as his Sunnah, was that "war is perfidy". This *hadīs* came in handy to Muizzuddin Muhammad bin Sam who is known in Indian history as Muhammad Ghuri.

By the time of Ghori, the Islamic armies of the Arabs and the Turks had struggled successively for nearly 540 years in order to seize the heartland of India, and to convert the whole country into a *Dār-ul-Islam.* But they had succeeded only in occupying the frontier areas of Kabul, Zabul, the North-West Frontier Province, Multan, and parts of Punjab and Sindh. This was small consolation compared to the victories of Islam elsewhere, and that, too, in a far shorter span of time.

THE NEW ALIGNMENT OF FORCES

The Yaminis (Ghaznavids) had been overthrown in Afghanistan by the new dynasty of Shansabanis (Ghurids) around the time that Vigraharaja (also known as Visaladeva) was consolidating his hold over territories recovered from the Muslim possessions in the Punjab. Prithiviraja II, the successor to Vigraharaja, had placed his maternal uncle, Kilhan, in charge of the fort at Asika (Hansi). His Hansi stone inscription of AD 1168 describes the Hammira (Amir) as a "dagger pointed at the whole world". The flag that fluttered at the gateway of this fort, we are told, "defied the Hammira, as it were". Another line in this inscription compares Prithviraja II to Sri Rama, and Kilhana to

Hanumana.[1]

Besides the Chauhans of Delhi and Ajmer, India at that time had two more powerful kingdoms arrayed against the Muslim invader — the Chaulukyas (Solankis) of Gujarat and the Gahadavads of Kanauj. Had these three Hindu powers joined hands, they would have cleared out the barbarians not only from the Punjab, Multan, Sindh and the North-West Frontier Province but also from Afghanistan which had become the launching pad for Islamic aggression. But this they failed to do because each one of them was bidding for an empire at the cost of others. It seems that the earlier vision which had inspired Hindu princes in North India to come together into a confederacy in the face of a common enemy, had also vanished by this time. In the event, the Chauhans were defeated by fraud, and the Gahadavads were taken by surprise. The Chaulukyas also had a taste of what a Muslim victory would mean, though they survived for the time being.

Muhammad Ghuri was installed at Ghazni in AD 1173 by his elder brother, Ghiyasuddin, who had himself ascended the throne at Ghur in AD 1163. The task of conquering India was assigned to Muhammad Ghuri while his brother was extending the Ghurid empire towards the west. The Ghaznavids were still in possession of the provinces they had been able to conquer in north-western India. "Muhammad Ghori," writes Dr. Misra, "was fully alive to the strength of the forces opposing him and, unlike Mahmud of Ghazni, he relied more on stratagems than on the strength of arms to gain victories against his adversaries."[2]

It would have been logical for him, to start with, to take the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab from the Ghaznavids. But this would have alerted the Chauhans beyond the Sutlej. They, too, could have advanced further west to contest for the Ghaznavid possessions. Muhammad Ghuri knew that

1. Ibid., p. 74-75.
2. Ibid., p. 84.

he could throw out the Ghaznavids whenever he chose. His problem was the three Hindu kingdoms which were blocking his way into the heartland of Hindustan.

DEFEAT IN GUJARAT

So Ghuri entered India through the Gomal pass and "wrested Multan from the Qaramatih chiefs in AD 1175". Next he "intrigued with the wife of the Bhatti Rai of Uch and promised to marry her if she poisoned her husband". Firishta records that "she declined the honour for herself but secured it for her daughter, caused her husband to be put to death and surrendered the fort".[3] Ghuri's way to Gujarat now lay open by way of Western Rajasthan. The Chauhans were not likely to mind if the Chaulukyas went down. Prithviraj III who was to become an inveterate foe of Ghuri in later years, had ascended the throne of Ajmer only an year earlier. He was prevailed upon by his Chief Minister, Kadambavasa, not to interfere. On the other hand Mahmud Ghaznavi's successful raid on Somanath, one hundred and fifty years earlier, had encouraged Ghuri to imagine that Gujarat was an easy prey. He was dreaming of reaching Somanath, and repeating the 'pious performance' of Mahmud. Muslim historians had been gloating over Mahmud's raid throughout the long interval, without remembering the difficulties with which the raider had subsequently secured his escape.

Muhammad Ghuri advanced upon Gujarat in AD 1178 with a large army. Merutuṅga writes in his *Prabandha-chintāmaṇi* that "the mother of young Mularaja, queen Naikidevi, the daughter of Parmardin of Goa, taking her son in her lap, led the Chaulukya army against the Turushkas and defeated them at Gadararaghatta near the foot of Mount Abu". Mularaja II was a minor at that time. Firishta records that the king of Gujarat "advanced with an army to resist the Mohammedans and defeated

3. Ibid., p. 85.

them with great slaughter. They suffered many hardships before they reached Ghazni."[4] In Sanskrit inscriptions of Gujarat, Mularaja is invariably mentioned as the "conqueror of Garjanakas [dwellers of Ghazni]". One inscription states that "during the reign of Mularaja even a woman could defeat the Hammira [Amir]".

Muhammad Ghuri did not lead another expedition against a Hindu prince for the next 12 years. His experience in Gujarat was too traumatic to be forgotten in a fit of megalomania. He employed the interregnum in occupying the Ghaznavid possessions in India till he reached Lahore in AD 1186. Now he stood face to face with Prithiviraja III, the famous Chauhan ruler of Ajmer (AD 1177-1192) whose feudatory, Govindaraja, was stationed at Delhi. *Prithvirāja-vijaya* tells us that the Chauhan ruler was fully alive to the rise of a "beef-eating Mlechha named Ghori in the north-west who had captured Garjani [Ghazni]".[5] *Hammīra-mahākāvya* of Nayachandra Sūri states that Prithviraja defeated Muhammad Ghuri at least seven times while *Prabandha-chintāmaṇi* of Merutuṅga and *Prithvirājarāso* of Chand Bardai put the number of Prithviraja's victories at twenty-one. Muslim historians — Minhaj, Firishta, and others — on the other hand, mention only two battles between these two rulers, one in AD 1191 and the other a year later. "Dasharatha Sharma reconciles these two versions by suggesting that the Ghorid generals began raiding the Chahamana [Chauhan] territories soon after the occupation of Lahore in AD 1186 but were beaten back by the Chahmana forces. Muslim historians have ignored them altogether."[6]

DEFEAT AT TARAIN

It was only in AD 1191 that Muhammad Ghuri "caused the forces of Islam to be organised and advanced against the fortress

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5. Ibid., p. 90.
6. Ibid., p. 91.

of Tabarhindah (Sirhind) and took that stronghold". This was a frontier fortress held by a Chauhan feudatory. Prithviraja now advanced with his own army and met Muhammad Ghuri at Tarain. "Before the onslaught of the Chahmana army, the right and left flanks of the Muslim army broke down and took to flight...The Sultan might have fallen off his horse had not a Khalji youth recognised him and carried him out of the field of battle. The Muslim army, not seeing their leader, fled headlong from the battlefield and did not draw rein till they had reached a place considered safe from pursuit. The Sultan was also brought there in a litter of broken spears. From there, they returned to their own dominion."[7] The Rajputs did not press their advantage to a final conclusion. They were satisfied with Sirhind which was recovered soon after.

Dr. Misra observes: "Prithviraja could have now easily consummated his victory by chasing and annihilating his routed enemy. But, instead, he allowed the defeated Muslim army to return unmolested. This magnanimity, though in accord with the humane dictums of the Hindu Shastras, was completely unsuitable against a ruthless enemy who recognised no moral or ideological scruples in the attainment of victory. The Hindus lacked the capacity to comprehend the real nature of their ruthless adversaries and the new tactics needed to encounter their challenge to Indian independence."[8] The nemesis came next year, in AD 1192, when Muhammad Ghuri who had made "sleep and rest unlawful to himself" came back with another army in order to avenge his defeat. Hindus had permitted his earlier army to escape without suffering much hurt.

RESORT TO DECEIT

Before he reached Tarain again, Muhammad Ghuri had sent

7. Ibid., p. 91-92. There are some other Muslim accounts of how the Sultan escaped death.

8. Ibid., p. 92.

a messenger from Lahore asking Prithviraja "to embrace the Musalman faith and acknowledge his supremacy." Firishta reproduces as follows the letter which Prithviraja wrote to him from the field of battle: "To the bravery of our soldiers we believe you are no stranger, and to our great superiority in numbers which daily increases, your eyes bear witness...You will repent in time of the rash resolution you have taken, and we shall permit you to retreat in safety; but if you have determined to brave your destiny, we have sworn by our gods to advance upon you with our rank-breaking elephants, our plain-trampling horses, and blood-thirsty soldiers, early in the morning to crush the army which your ambition has led to ruin." The language of this letter is the typical Rajput language — full of *kṣhamābhāva* (forgiveness) emanating from perfect confidence in one's own *parākrama* (prowess).

Now the Sultan tried his stratagem He replied: "I have marched into India at the command of my brother whose general I am. Both honour and duty bind me to exert myself to the utmost...but I shall be glad to obtain a truce till he is informed of the situation and I have received his answer." The Hindus fell into the trap. Firishta records "The Sultan made preparations for battle...and when the Rajputs had left their camp for purposes of obeying calls of nature, and for the purpose of performing ablutions, he entered the plain with his ranks marshalled. Although the unbelievers were amazed and confounded, still in the best manner they could, they stood the fight."[9] The battle raged upto afternoon, when the Hindus found themselves tired and exhausted. They had not eaten even a breakfast. The fight was finished when Ghuri threw in his reserve division constituted by the flower of his army. The Rajputs were defeated, and suffered great slaughter.

The Muslims now occupied Delhi and marched into Ajmer. Prithviraja who had been made captive and who refused to swear

8. Ibid., p. 92.
9. Ibid., p. 93.

submission, was beheaded and his son was installed as the new king. Rajput resistance was still continuing in the countryside. Ghuri wanted to mollify the patriots by means of a showboy. But that was of no avail. Hariraja, the younger brother of Prithviraja, reoccupied Ajmer in AD 1193. He also planned to attack and take Delhi again. The plan failed because Ghuri had assembled another big army for his march on the Gahadavad kingdom of Kanauj. Hariraja committed suicide. He was too ashamed to live after so many of his people had embraced death in defence of their country and culture, and after he had remained unsuccessful in redeeming his own pledge.

THE GAHADVADS GIVE A GOOD ACCOUNT

Jayachandra, the Gahadavad ruler of Kanauj, had not only kept aloof from the battles raging to his south and west; he had also rejoiced in the defeat of the Chauhans, the traditional rivals of the Gahadavads in the bid for supremacy over North India. It was his turn to stand up and accept the challenge when Ghuri appeared at the gates of his kingdom with a re-equipped horde in AD 1194. The armies met at Chandawar. "The battle was fiercely contested and the Gahadavads led by Jayachandra almost carried the day when the latter seated on a lofty howdah received a deadly wound from an arrow and fell from his exalted seat to the earth." The Muslims were able to plunder Kanauj and Asni where Jayachandra had kept his treasure. But Rajput resistance continued till Jayachandra's son, Harishchandra, recovered Kanauj, Jaunpur and Mirzapur in AD 1197. "Kanauj seems to have stayed independent till the reign of Iltutmish who ultimately conquered it from Harish Chandra's successor, Adakkamalla."[10]

The main centres of Hindu power in North India had thus collapsed after the defeat of the Chauhans and the Gahadavads. Bihar, which had been a bone of contention between the

10. Ibid., p. 96.

Gahadavads and the Senas of Bengal, now became a no-man's-land. Bakhtiyar Khalji, a general of Ghuri, swept through Bihar in AD 1202, and reached Navadvipa, the capital of the Senas, a year later. This was a lightning raid which took the 80 years old Lakshmana Sena by surprise. The Muslim squad had entered Navadvipa in the guise of Muslim merchants to whose visits the Hindus of that city were used. The Sena Raja fled to Sonargaon in East Bengal.

HINDU RESISTANCE CONTINUES

Hindu resistance, however, did not cease. The Muslims had occupied the big cities and the fortified towns. But they had no hold on the countryside which was seething with revolt. The first to deliver a counter-attack were the Mher Rajputs around Ajmer. They rose in AD 1195 and appealed to the Chaulukya ruler of Gujarat for help. The help came. Qutbuddin Aibak, another general of Ghuri, was in charge of Ajmer at that time. According to Hasan Nizami, a contemporary historian, "The action lasted the whole day and the next morning that immense army of Naharwala [Anhilawara, capital of Gujarat] came to the assistance of the vanguard, slew many of the Musalmans, wounded their commander, pursued them to Ajmer and encamped within one parasang of the place." Aibak rushed messengers to Ghazni, crying for help. "It was only after a very large army was despatched to reinforce him, that Aibak could be rescued."[11]

Aibak, in turn, invaded the kingdom of Gujarat in AD 1197. The Chaulukyan army again faced the Muslims at the foot of Mount Abu where Ghuri had been defeated in AD 1178. The Muslim army became nervous and dared not attack. "It is clear from Hasan Nizami's account that the army of Islam advanced under the cover of darkness of night and caught the Chaulukyan army unprepared at dawn."[12] The Hindus were defeated this

11. Ibid., p. 87.
12. Ibid., p. 88.

time. Anhilawara was occupied and sacked. But the Muslims could not hold Gujarat for long. In the next four years, Bhimadeva II, the Chaulukyan king, recovered the whole of his kingdom from the invaders and was back in Anhilawara in AD 1201. Arnoraja, the Vaghela feudatory of Bhima Deva, met his death in this campaign. But his son, Lavanaprasada, won a singular victory at Stambha, modern Cambay. Sridhara, the governor of Devapattan, inflicted another crushing defeat on the Muslims. "How and when this army of occupation was driven out of Gujarat is nowhere mentioned by Muslim historians. It is precisely here that the two inscriptions of Dabhoi and Verawal refer to the heroic struggles of two generals of the Chaulukya king, Lavanaprasada and Sridhara." Dr. Misra concludes: "For nearly the whole of the next century, Gujarat remained independent. Perhaps no other Indian dynasty put up a more sustained or successful resistance against the Muslims for a longer period."[13]

ASSAM STAYS FREE

In the eastern theatre, Bakhtiyar Khalji could not conquer East Bengal. The Madanpara and Edilpur inscriptions of Visvarupa Sena and Keshava Sena, the successors of Lakshmana Sena, speak of victories won by them over the *yavanas*. Hodivala points out that "we possess epigraphic evidence of Lakshmana Sena's descendants having ruled for at least three generations at Vikramapur near Sonargaon in Dacca".[14]

Blocked by the Senas from East Bengal, Bakhtiyar Khalji advanced into Assam. But his army was destroyed by the king of Kamarupa. He was able to escape with his own life and about a hundred followers. He fell sick due to excessive grief because of the slaughter suffered by Muslims and died or was murdered in sick bed by a Muslim rival. "The Musalman invasion of the Brahmaputra valley was repeated on several occasions during the

13. Ibid., p. 89.
14. Ibid., p. 97.

next five centuries of Muslim rule over north India, but most of these expeditions ended in disaster and Islam failed to make any inroads into the valley."[15] The present plight of the Hindus of Assam at the hands of Muslim infiltrators is entirely due to that "peaceful penetration" which was helped in the 20th century, first by the British patrons of the Muslim League and, later on, by vote-hungry Hindu politicians of the ruling party in independent India.

THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Misra concludes the "history of the epic struggle of the Indians against the attempts of the early Muslim invaders to foist an alien faith, an alien culture and an alien rule over Indian soil" with the following words: "Beginning with the first Arab expedition against Thana near Bombay in A.D. 636 the Muslims only succeeded in establishing the Delhi Sultanate in AD 1206, that is, after prolonged and relentless efforts lasting as many as 570 years. The magnitude of the resistance offered by Indians can be easily comprehended if we remember that the duration of the effective Muslim rule over northern India, not to speak of the whole of India which was much less, if ever, lasted only 500 years (upto the death of Aurangzeb in AD 1707)."[16]

16. Ibid., p. 101.

Chapter V
THE LESSONS WE HAVE TO LEARN

Dr. Misra's monograph is pertinent not only to a past period of Indian history but also to our situation at present. The lessons which this learned study draws for us can be ignored by us only at our own peril.

Firstly, it highlights Hindu heroism in the face of an inveterate Islamic imperialism. Such heroism has seldom been seen in the annals of any other people. Read with the record of similar heroism in a later period and in a continued struggle with the same foe, the story can help us correct the current notion that Hindus have always been, and continue to be, a race of lily-livered cowards who have invariably run away from every contest. The notion has become prevalent not only among the non-Hindus but also among the Hindus themselves due to a wrong teaching of Indian history over a long period of time. Hindus have to revive and re-affirm their old tradition of heroism. They have to make it known to all concerned that they are not going to tolerate those forces and factions which question the independence and integrity of their country, nor remain passive towards those elements which are trying to temper with the Hindu character of their homeland in the name of Secularism, or composite culture, or minority rights, or some other subversive slogan.

Secondly, it presents an authentic portrait of Islam as a political ideology of aggressive and tenacious imperialism which will not stop at any means or methods in order to achieve its ultimate aim — the conquest of all non-Muslim lands and the conversion of all infidels (non-Muslims). Islam has legitimised in the name of its godling, Allah, and from the mouth of its prophet, Muhammad, not only a permanent war against the unbelievers but also the plunder, slaughter, and enslavement of all those who get defeated in war, or allow themselves to be subverted otherwise. Hindus have been misled, mostly by their own

intellectuals and political leaders, into believing that Islam is also a religion as good as or, in some respects, even better than their own Sanatana Dharma. They have to realize and correct this mistake before it is too late. So long as Hindus entertain the false belief that Islam is a religion and that Muslims are a religio-cultural minority, the so-called communal problem will never be solved.

ISLAMIC IMPERIALISM HAS REVIVED

We are witnessing today a revival of Islam with all its imperialist ambitions and in all its fundamentalist ferocity. Flushed with its oil-wealth, Islam has re-acquired its self-righteousness of olden days, and has re-affirmed its mission of world-conquest through terror and subversion. India in particular has been chosen as a priority target. There is no dearth of voices from all over the Islamic world calling for "finishing the unfinished work of Islam in India".

Most other countries can take care of themselves in the face of a militant Islam. No other country in the world is so vulnerable to this threat as we are at present and are likely to remain in future unless we mend our fences. We have as our immediate neighbour a highly militarised Islamic state waiting for an opportunity to pounce upon us as soon as she achieves a strategic superiority in armaments, and a favourable international situation. Today we have a friend in the Soviet Union which keeps Pakistan in check. But tomorrow the two of them may strike a deal which will free Pakistan to turn towards the east. The United States has been arming Pakistan in the fond belief that Islam is a barrier against Communism and that Pakistan will stay as her bastion in South Asia. This is the same sort of delusion which had led the U.S. to put quite a few of her eggs in Iran's basket.[1]

1. This was written before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Now that the collapse has taken place, we witness Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir. The USA has remained friendly to Pakistan out of some other considerations.

All told, the situation for us is similar to that which we had faced from the middle of the seventh to the end of the twelfth century when, flushed with the plunder from many lands and the mass conversion of many an ancient people, Islam had come to believe that a total conquest and conversion of India was its divinely ordained destiny. Let us not harbour the illusion that the Arab countries, whose causes we support more fervently than they do themselves, will stand by us in any conflict with Pakistan. The three wars which have already been forced upon us by Pakistan provide ample proof to the contrary.

HINDUS ARE MORE CONFUSED THAN EVER BEFORE

It is in this context that Dr. Misra's searching analysis of the causes of our defeat at the end of the 12th century acquires an immense importance. The struggle between Islamic imperialism and Indian resistance, military as well as socio-cultural, was grim and long-drawn-out, lasting as it did over 570 years. The new contest is not likely to last that long due to the changed character of warfare. It is true that we battled against Islamic imperialism for another 550 years and defeated it in the final round in the middle of the 18th century. But it is also true that the losses we suffered in terms of territory (Afghanistan, Seistan, Makran), population, social disintegration and spiritual corruption were simply staggering. By the middle of the 20th century Islam succeeded in consolidating the gains it had made during more than a thousand years' aggression against India. On the other hand, we have come out of the latest contest more confused than ever before, so much so that while a highly humanitarian national culture gets condemned as a narrow and militant communalism, an ideology of totalitarian terror gets registered as a religion, a closed and theocratic creed struts about as secularism, and a fanatic fraternity addicted to frequent rounds of violence passes for a "poor and persecuted minority". The situation is far from reassuring.

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

Before Dr. Misra presents his own in-depth analysis of the causes of our defeats during the period he has surveyed, he takes a close look at the theories concocted by British historians like Elphinstone and "modern Muslim historians" like M. Nazim, M. Habib and K.A. Nizami. He takes considerable pains in examining these theories. His conclusion is that they have assumed "facts" which are nowhere in evidence. This is not the place to present those theories or Dr. Misra's refutation of them. Here we are concerned with what actually happened in history and not with British and Muslim attempts at adding insults to injury. We shall, therefore, cite only one theory, that of M. Habib, to show how ridiculous even a Marxist Muslim can become when it comes to camouflaging Islamic imperialism and maligning Hindu society and culture. Dr. Misra quotes the verdict of Habib in the latter's own words: "Face to face with the social and economic provisions of the *Shariat* and the Hindu *Smiritis* as political alternatives, the Indian city-worker preferred the *Shariat.*" Commenting on the Ghurian conquest, Habib concludes: "This was not a conquest properly so-called. This was a turn-over of public opinion — a sudden turn-over, no doubt, but still one that was long overdue." P. Saran, another historian quoted by Dr. Misra, has rightly quipped: "Allah manages to survive within the framework of this new Marxism."[2] The fact that Habib has been hailed as the doyen of secular historians speaks volumes about the character of Secularism in this country.

MISTAKEN ANALYSIS

Coming to serious and scholarly explanations of Hindu defeats, Dr. Misra deals, first of all, with "the defects of the political system of the Hindu states" and observes that disunity among the Hindu states was not a very material cause of these defeats. "No doubt the Hindu states were for ever engaged in internecine

2. Ram Gopal Misra, op. cit., p. 103.

conflicts among themselves but such quarrels were a common feature of the Middle Ages everywhere and more so in Central Asia. If such almost intermittent struggle among the Muslims of Central Asia did not prevent them from expanding their rule over other lands, it is useless to blame Indian rulers' internecine struggle for their ultimate collapse."[3] It may be added that in spite of their disunity, not a single Indian state ever sided with the invader, nor failed to put up a resolute resistance in its own turn.

Also, Dr. Misra does not agree with the thesis that Indians at that time lacked "national consciousness, love of country and pride of freedom". He writes: "That Indians were fully alive to the dangers of foreign invasion and their love of the country was equally matched by desire to fight for it, is a reality that can be substantiated. Each wave of Muslim invasion created a profound stir among the Indian states and they often pooled their resources to meet the aggressor."[4] He cites evidence of at least four confederacies formed by Hindu states during this period. The evidence is not a Hindu concoction but has been culled from the accounts of medieval Muslim historians.

REAL CAUSES OF HINDU DEFEATS

Finally, Dr. Misra lays his probing finger on the real factors which contributed to Hindu defeats during this period. The very first factor, according to him, was the lack of a forward policy vis-a-vis the Muslim invaders. In his own words, "What the Rajputs really lacked was a spirit of aggression so conspicuous among the Muslims, and a will to force the war in the enemy's dominions and thus destroy the base of his power."[5]

Secondly, a forward policy could not be pursued in the absence of a "strong central government for even the whole of

3. Ibid., p. 121.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 123.

northern India which could think and act for the whole country". As a result, "The Rajput rulers found it difficult to look beyond the territorial limits of their own kingdoms and their regional interests pushed the national issues into the background."[6] Compared to a strong central authority, the various confederacies organised by the Rajputs proved to be patch-works which came apart either under the impact of military defeat, or as soon as the immediate purpose of stopping the enemy had been served.

Thirdly, the military organisation of the Rajputs was inferior as compared to that of the Muslims. The Rajputs depended mainly on feudal levies assembled on the spur of the moment. "These feudal levies with no unity of training and organisation, coming together at the last moment, fighting under the leadership of and for their individual leaders, could not be expected to beat back an enemy united in purpose and organisation and acting as one coordinate unit." A medieval Muslim historian quoted by Dr. Misra said so in so many words: "A commander with a heterogeneous army consisting of soldiers — a hundred from here and a hundred from there — cannot achieve anything. An army with so varied and so many component elements has never been able to achieve anything great."[7]

Fourthly, "The cavalry and mounted archers of the invading armies gave them a decisive superiority over the home forces. The Indian rulers too maintained cavalry units. But the Arabic and Turkoman horses were much better adapted to warfare... The second strong point of the Turkish military machine was its mounted archery. Their deadly arrows easily covered a range of eighty to hundred paces... Reference to archery among the Indian armies after the age of the epics is conspicuous by its absence."[8]

Lastly, "the strategy and tactics employed by the invaders on

6. Ibid., p. 124.
7. Ibid., p. 125.
8. Ibid., p. 126-27.

the battlefield proved decisive in their favour. Indians failed to keep pace with the developments of military strategy taking place in Central Asia before the advent of Islam. The Arabs and Turks perfected them... Besides, the traditional Rajput chivalry looked upon the battle as a ritual or a tournament for displaying their fighting skill and swordsmanship under well-recognised rules of sport. Did not Manu, the ancient law-giver proclaim — 'A battle was ideally a gigantic tournament with many rules: a warrior fighting from a chariot might not strike one on foot; an enemy in flight, wounded or asking a quarter, might not be slain; the lives of enemy soldiers who had lost their weapons were to be respected; poisoned weapons were not to be used; homage and not annexation was the rightful fruit of victory.' The Arabs and the Turks, on the other hand, knew no rules and waged a grim and ruthless struggle to destroy their enemies. Feints and sudden attacks, manoeuvering under the cover of darkness and pretending defeat and flights, keeping a large reserve to be used only at critical moments — all these took the Indians by surprise and crippled their fighting capacity. The Indians never tried to take advantage of their enemy's weakness and perhaps considered it unchivalrous to do so. Such magnanimity on the part of Indian kings...was a sure invitation to disaster against a ruthless foe who recognised no moral or ideological scruples in the pursuit of victory."[9]

SAPPERS AND MINERS OF ISLAMIC IMPERIALISM

Muslims had two more advantages in addition to their aggressiveness and superiority in the art of warfare. "During this long period of Indian resistance", observes Dr. Misra, "the infiltration of Arabs, and later on the Turks, continued almost unabated into India, both through armed invasions as well as through peaceful migration from Central Asia. The Hindus, true to their catholicity of religious outlook and rich tradition of tol-

9. Ibid.

erance, never obstructed the peaceful immigrants and even zealously granted them security and full religious freedom...The greatest Chishti saint of India, Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti, came to Ajmer just before the battles of Tarain and was able to attract a number of devoted followers... It is all the more remarkable that this Hindu tolerance towards the Muslim merchants and mystics should have continued even after the invasions of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni... As Professor Habib points out, 'the far-flung campaigns of Sultan Mahmud would have been impossible without an accurate knowledge of trade routes and local resources, which was probably obtained from Muslim merchants.' The same can be said to hold good about the invasions of Muhammad Ghori or Qutbuddin Aibak."[10] The sufis were working not only as the spies of Islamic imperialism but also as deceivers of gullible Hindu masses.

A BROTHERHOOD OF BANDITS

Secondly, "rich plunder acted as a good supplement to the religious zeal of the Muslims. The Muslim practice of dividing the spoils of war between the leader and the soldiers might have encouraged the soldiers to follow their leaders through thick and thin."[11] The Hindu soldiery had no such incentive. Hindu religion and culture forbade such beastly motives for "bravery". But this was the very basis on which Muslim brotherhood had been organised from the very beginning. In its behaviour towards non-Muslim societies, it has always been a brotherhood of bandits.

These are the lessons we have to learn from the history of the period surveyed by Dr. Misra if we want to deal effectively with the new wave of Islamic aggression which is now trying to engulf us from within and without. Islam is still far from being cured of its self-righteousness. Its inborn imperialist instinct is impelling it towards a truncated India which it feels and finds to be an easy target. Let us not be taken in by the howls of con-

10. Ibid., p. 101-02.

trived grievances which the spokesmen of Islam in India have started hawking in increasingly hysterical voices. In the history of Islam this has always been a prelude to predatory action. Hajjaj had hawked some grievances against Raja Dahir on the eve of equipping an armed force more formidable than any that had ever been sent against Sindh. The Pirpur Report of the Muslim League was only a preparation for the demand for Pakistan.

Chapter VI
THE NATURE OF NATIONAL FRONTIERS

At times and in certain situations, the frontiers of a nation are not merely physical; they are also ideological. We shall never be able to overcome our predicament vis-a-vis Pakistan unless we understand her ideological frontiers and define our own.

Compared to us Pakistan is much smaller in size and population. She is much poorer in industrial infrastructure and other resources. Yet she has attacked us not once but three times in the short span of 24 years. And she is preparing feverishly to attack us again as soon as she feels that the time is opportune. This is not the normal behaviour of a normal nation. This is evidence enough that the basic motive of her behaviour lies elsewhere than in the cold-blooded calculations of military balance, strategic or tactical.

PAKISTAN: SPEARHEAD OF AN ISLAMIC BLOC

The mullahs, military generals and the mass media in Pakistan have all along harked back to the "glorious deeds" of Mahmud Ghaznavi and Muhammad Ghuri when "the accursed Hindu *kafirs* had a true taste of the Islamic sword." They have always looked at us with contempt as "cowardly banias" who are bound to surrender in course of time. We on our part have always dismissed this strain in her stance as mere poetry which may entertain her own people but which we should not take seriously. We have never tried to pin down this strain as an ideological strain which goes beyond Pakistan's physical frontiers, and makes her a member of the larger Islamic world sprawling away from both sides of our borders.

Medieval Muslim historians tell us that Mahmud Ghaznavi used to be highly praised and heartily congratulated by all Islamic countries of that time, whenever he returned from India with plunder and prisoners of war, and with idols of Hindu Gods

which were placed on the doorsteps to mosque in Ghazni, Baghdad, Mecca and Medina for being trampled upon by the faithful. Whatever their own differences with Mahmud Ghaznavi, in this context they were all agreed that he was doing the work of Allah and had the blessings of the Prophet to support him. The Islamic state of Pakistan has not been able to repeat the exploits of Mahmud Ghaznavi so far. But whenever she has attacked us she has been applauded by the rest of the Islamic world, and has received all round support in her role of a *mujāhid* (holy warrior) in spite of the fact that we have been espousing all Islamic causes abroad with a fervour and consistency which puts to shame the Islamic states themselves.

Till the end of the 'sixties, the support which Pakistan received from the Islamic countries was mostly moral support because the latter were in no position to extend much material aid. But since the early 'seventies, the oil-rich Islamic countries have been providing the massive finances which enable Pakistan to build and maintain her huge military machine including her nuclear establishment. The United States may be selling the sophisticated hardware which Pakistan has been piling up with frantic speed. But the bill is being footed largely by the oil-rich Islamic states of West Asia and North Africa. This should be sufficient to prove that Pakistan is not an individual state. On the contrary, it has become the spearhead of an Islamic Bloc which is increasingly becoming not only more prosperous and better equipped militarily but also more fundamentalist, more self-righteous, and more militant for the spread of Islam.

Nor are Pakistan's ideological frontiers confined to the Islamic countries alone; they are spread out to a sizeable section of our own population. We have never faced frankly and honestly the unpleasant fact that, with some honourable exceptions, our Muslim countrymen, by and large, are supporters of Pakistan and other Islamic countries as against us whenever they have to choose between the two. There is a conspiracy of silence about

this stark reality. Admitting it even privately to ourselves, not to speak of discussing it publicly, will be a serious slur on our Secularism. But the truth cannot be wished away so easily. And a price has away to be paid for turning away from truth, particularly when the security of a nation is involved.

THE CHARACTER OF OUR STATE

It is in this context that Dr. Misra's book assumes an added importance. He has emphasised it again and again that the Rajput states of medieval India fought so tenaciously and for so long in the face of an inveterate foe not only because they were trying to preserve certain physical frontiers but also because they were trying to protect a social order and a cultural complex created and sustained by Sanatana Dharma. These Rajput states were Hindu states in consciousness as well as character. They stood firm and spared no sacrifice because they were proud of their ancient Hindu heritage, and looked down with contempt on the barbarism represented by Islam. They failed in the final round only because they could not pursue a forward policy due to their lack of understanding about the nature of Islamic aggression, and in the absence of a central state which could have pooled their resources, maintained a standing army, and updated the art of warfare.

Today we have a central state, a standing army, and some sort of a central government. We have also proved in the several contests forced upon us by Pakistan so far that we have not seriously neglected our armoury or the art of warfare. All that may lull some people into a belief that we can take care of Pakistan whenever she goes berserk. But the advantageous factors in our favour are more apparent than real. We are self-confident vis-a-vis Pakistan only because we have not been able to see the deeper forces working towards our defeat and ruination in the long run. And that long run may prove to be not so long this time because of the changed character of warfare.

The state which we have in India today does not resemble even remotely the Rajput states of that period. By no stretch of imagination can it be called a Hindu state. Far from harbouring any Hindu consciousness or having a Hindu character, it does not even reflect the objective reality that Hindus constitute an overwhelming majority in this country. And instead of recognising Islam as a species of barbarism, it patronises Islam as an integral part of the Indian heritage. Thus, for all practical purposes, this state is a legacy of the bygone British Raj rather than a conscious creation of any national spirit or vision. The constitution which controls and moves the structure of this state is only a mechanical device for keeping together what it regards as a conglomeration of contending communities — religious, racial, regional — rather than an embodiment of any national aspirations, in spite of all its high-flown verbiage borrowed in bits and parts from several models in the West. It has singularly failed to touch the heart of the Hindu masses whom it treats like handicapped children sunk in stupor and sloth.

On top of it, the mind which has dominated the central government and evolved its policies since the dawn of independence is infinitely worse so far as Hindu society and culture are concerned. This mind is not only self-alienated; it is also self-righteous in the name of what it describes as Secularism, Socialism and some other slogans borrowed from abroad and broadcast with intense zeal. It not only repudiates with repugnance any suggestion (which is often made by the so-called minorities) that it shares any Hindu sentiments; it also carries within it a deep-seated anti-Hindu animus. It frowns upon every expression of Hindu culture in our public life in the name of what it flaunts as composite culture which most of the time means the culture of Islam imported into this country by force of arms. It denounces as Hindu communalism even the most dignified defence of some perfectly legitimate Hindu causes while it smiles indulgently or looks the other way when Muslim hooligans take out violent

demonstrations in support of causes which have not even the slightest relevance to this country. And it smells Hindu chauvinism in whatever small effort Hindu society manages to make in order to strengthen itself, while it aids and abets the consolidation of highly aggressive Islamic forces financed by foreign powers.

THE TEMPER OF OUR POLITICS

What is still worse is the role of our political parties which are quite a few in number but which shout the same set of slogans. All these parties scowl or shy away when Hindus plead that they also have a case. But all of them incorporate more and more Muslim demands in their manifestos, and feel fulfilled when mullahs and Muslim politicians condescend to speak from their platforms. The more malevolent the mullah and the Muslim politician, the better it is for the secular credentials of the party concerned. All these political parties corrode the cohesiveness of Hindu society by fragmenting it into smaller and smaller vote-banks on the basis of caste, or sect, or language, or some other secondary differences which no normal society can do without. At the same time, all of them contribute to the consolidation of a single Muslim vote-bank which, in turn, blackmails them further, and which has come to wield an influence and a representation out of all proportion to its known numerical strength.

The vote-hungry politics which is promoted by these highly sloganised parties is practically devoid of any public content even of a local character, not to speak of any national concern. This politics has increasingly come to revolve round the personal ambitions of wily politicians rather than round any national policies or programmes. The more dishonest the politician, the better he fares in public life. Politics has become a rat-race in which every politician who wants to survive has to play the game according to certain well-understood but seldom-spoken rules. Most politicians except those in power have to live from hand to mouth and be always on the look out for more and more money

to meet the mounting election expenses. This has opened the floodgates of corruption by foreign money which, in recent years, has come to mean Muslim money flowing in ever larger volumes from the oil-rich Islamic countries. One cannot help suspecting that the Secularism sold by certain political parties, in an all-round atmosphere of cynicism, is more a matter of financial compulsion than a matter of conviction. The Islamic countries which pay for the conspicuous consumption and high life-style of some politicians, particularly in the opposition camp, can always call the tune.

Such a soft-brained government and a short-sighted politics can hardly be in a position to evolve or employ those forward or long-term policies which are needed more urgently now than ever before. Such a government and politics are most likely to fritter away all their strength and energies, including those of our armed forces, in one frustrating enterprise after another. What has actually happened after our conflicts with Pakistan in the past illustrates the point. The conflicts were not at all of our own seeking and were imposed upon us by a sabre-rattling Islamic state. Our armed forces carried out creditably the tasks assigned to them. But every time the politicians allowed the aggressor to escape without paying any penalty whatsoever for his unprovoked aggression. The victories won by our armed forces on the field of battle at the cost of so much blood and sacrifice were bartered away by the politicians on the tables of diplomacy in exchange for nothing more substantial than international applause.

Take the much trumpeted triumph in 1971. Our armed forces did everything that was expected of them, and gave a good account on every front. But at the diplomatic table in Simla we surrendered every advantage we had gained in exchange for a set of signatures on some pieces of paper by a thousand-year-war demagogue, Bhutto, who went back and immediately launched an ambitious project for making nuclear bombs. We are now holding seminars and making statements in Parliament about this

new threat from an old adversary. Again, we freed the people of East Pakistan from the tyranny and terror of their "brothers in faith" from West Pakistan. But we did precious little to ensure that Bangladesh does not revert to the old ways of her parent state. The result is there for everyone to see. Bangladesh has proclaimed that it is an Islamic state, and has become as hostile to us as Pakistan has always been. She is not only converting by force or hounding out her Hindu and Buddhist population but also pouring hundreds of thousands of Muslim infiltrators through our borders in Assam, Bengal and Bihar. The blood shed by our jawans and the sacrifices made by our civil population in shouldering the burdens of war, have gone in vain.

HINDU SOCIETY SHOULD SEIZE THE STATE

Hindu society has to make up its mind that it is no longer going to tolerate this degenerate politics which has been disintegrating Hindu society on the one hand, and consolidating the Muslim *millat* on the other. Only a politics created by Hindu consciousness and guided by Hindu ideology can retrieve the situation and meet the challenge of Islamic imperialism.

Hindu society has to stand up unitedly and firmly to seize the central state while it still functions as a democracy. It may not function as a democracy for long, looking at the Muslim, Marxist and dynastic pressures which are deflecting it towards dictatorship, if not in name, at least in spirit. Hindu society has to see to it that the central state acquires a Hindu character and gets infused with Hindu consciousness, and that the central government functions as a Hindu government in a Hindu homeland.

Dr. Misra's book will help Hindu society not only in acquiring the self-confidence that Islamic imperialism can be beaten back by Hindu heroism but also in evolving and employing a forward policy in the absence of which Hindu heroism had failed in the past. That policy has to be two-pronged — one directed

against the ideological frontiers of Pakistan in the world at large and the other against those frontiers at home.

PURSUIT OF FORWARD POLICIES

The first policy has to aim at destroying the bases of aggression. We have to push forward our own ideological frontiers and free every land from the stranglehold of Islam. We have plenty of friends in the forces of humanism, rationalism and universalism with all of which our own culture of Sanatana Dharma is in complete accord. We shall find these friends even in Islamic countries. They are waiting to be mobilised and made vocal. Let us not confuse these forces with the foreign policy postures of particular countries. These forces are of a more permanent and consistent character.

Secondly, we have to liberate our own Muslim masses from the stranglehold of Mullahs and Muslim politicians. The Muslim masses are our own people who have been alienated from their ancestral society and culture by the ideology of Islam. On the other hand, the mullahs and Muslim politicians are mostly descendants of foreign invaders — Arabs, Turks, Iranians — who have not yet been cured of the conviction that India is their patrimony bequeathed to them by the sword of their forefathers. Islam sits lightly on the Muslim masses who otherwise share a lot with their other countrymen. On the other hand, Islam is the only stock-in-trade of mullahs and Muslim politicians without which they will fall headlong from the prestigious pedestals on which they are perched at present. The two have to be differentiated and dealt with differently. The Muslim masses have to be won back to the national mainstream. The mullahs and Muslim politicians have to be isolated and immobilised.

In recent years, the mullahs and Muslim politicians have been receiving liberal financial assistance and sustained moral support from the oil-rich Islamic countries. Their tone has continued to become more and more aggressive. They have fre-

quently fomented riots in which Muslim mobs have turned violent not only against their Hindu neighbours but also against the security forces sent to restore law and order. The so-called Muslim minority is thus being fast converted into a far-flung fifth-column which will not hesitate to collaborate with foreign aggression as soon as that aggression shows some signs of success. This time the collaboration is not likely to be confined to spying as in the period surveyed by Dr. Misra. This time it will inevitably develop into wide-spread sabotage in the rear of our fighting forces.

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